

SPECIAL MEETING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

JUNE 10, 2008

KENDALL-DEAN SCHOOL

7:30 P.M.

The meeting began at 7:30 P.M. with the prayer and the pledge to the flag. Council members present were Mr. Keeley, Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Zwolenski and Mrs. Thibault. Mr. Lovett arrived later in the evening. Town Administrator Lowe was also in attendance.

School Committee members present were Mrs. Bonas, Mrs. Flaherty, Mrs. Meo, Mr. Vadenais and Mr. Lafleur. Superintendent of Schools Stephen Lindberg was also present.

FISCAL YEAR 08/09 BUDGET

The Council and the School Committee met to discuss the school department budget.

June 10, 2008

Mr. Keeley suggested using \$224,000 from the School Department surplus plus \$250,000 from the town surplus. That equals the \$474,000 requested in the override.

Mr. Leclerc spoke about Halliwell School. With the deteriorating

condition of the school, he is in favor of redistricting some classes to NSES and the new middle school. Some of the buildings should be demolished and any salvageable parts should be used in the other buildings.

In addition other initiatives for contract negotiations include: changing the current block scheduling to a modified block, or no block; reducing or eliminating the buy back option pertaining to health benefits; increasing the amount of teaching steps from 10 to 12; and increasing the co-pay option.

Mr. Leclerc also suggested the school department become its own tax district as well as the initiation of long-term planning.

(Mr. Lovett arrived at 7:50 P.M.)

Mr. Vadenais commented that all of the schools are over capacity right now. The reason for reconfiguration was to decrease an administrator.

Mr. Lovett felt the \$430,000 savings from health insurance should be considered. The school department should look at money they have before adding to the taxpayers' burden.

Mr. Vadenais responded that the medical savings was a windfall and a reduction of the budget.

Mrs. Flaherty stated that full-day kindergarten is one of the last things she wants to cut.

Mrs. Meo asked the Council to give the school department the best dollar amount that they think the town can afford. The school department will then make the cuts.

Mr. Zwolenski believed the surplus needs to be used. Many people are concerned with taxes and he has also received numerous calls about Halliwell.

Mrs. Thibault felt there is a need to consolidate services between the town and the school department.

Mr. Gary Ezovski urged the school department to sustain a sensible surplus.

Mr. Michael Rapko stated that priorities are not in order. The salaries and the benefits of the teachers' contract needs to be fixed. Block scheduling should be eliminated and a three-year plan should be initiated.

NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. David DeQuattro of Robinson Green Beretta gave a presentation on a proposed new elementary school, including costs for repairs to

Halliwell as well as a new school. He noted that if legislation is not introduced to the General Assembly by June 30th, it would not be able to be on the November ballot.

The School Committee members made a motion requesting the Council to submit legislation by June 30, 2008.

Because the Council members were not aware that a vote would be sought from them this evening, MOTION by Mr. Leclerc and seconded by Mr. Zwolenski to table this issue until June 23, 2008. Roll call: Mr. Keeley – no; Mr. Leclerc – yes; Mr. Lovett – no; Mr. Zwolenski – yes; Mrs. Thibault – yes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted 4 to 0 (Mr. Keeley recused himself) on an aye vote to enter into executive session at 10:30 P.M. pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)(5) Any discussions

June 10, 2008

or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the interest of the public.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett and seconded by Mr. Zwolenski to come out of

executive session at 10:50 P.M. He noted there were two votes taken while in executive session. One was a vote to authorize the Town of North Smithfield to borrow no more than \$2.5 million as stated in the Act that explains the bond referendum. The second was to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a purchase and sales agreement for the property.

The motion carried 3 to 1 with Mr. Leclerc voting no.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to adjourn at 10:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk